

Corps of Engineers flood teams working through the night to strengthen levees

6 p.m. Nov. 7, 2006

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SEATTLE -- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers emergency management teams are working through the night to fortify levees and provide assistance to communities in river basins around western Washington.

The Corps has 50 flood engineers out at eight river basins, has distributed more than 250,000 sand bags and continues to supply materials, equipment and assistance to communities as requested.

In the Snohomish/Stillaguamish basin, the Corps is assisting with flood fighting at Startup, Ebey Slough and North Bend, and supplying sandbags and assistance at Oso, Arlington, the Robe Valley and Stanwood.

The Skagit River basin flood team is working at Fir Island, Lyman and Cockreham placing rock to shore up levees. The team has supplied ecology blocks to protect the Sedro-Woolley sewage treatment plant and placed rock adjacent to the Sauk River at Bryson Road at a section that was in danger of giving way.

In the Nooksack basin, there was quite a bit of levee overtopping. As water continues to recede to allow teams access, engineers will assess levees for damage and determine where repairs are needed.

The Cedar River is being monitored, with no damage or flooding occurring at this time. The Briscoe levee on the Green River in Tukwila is a concern as it was damaged during last January's floods.

In the Puyallup basin, three projects are underway on the Carbon River in and near Orting to close up levee breaks with rock and shore up eroded sections.

Flood engineers are also out on the Olympic Peninsula and Chehalis River basin, providing technical assistance to the local government as requested and monitoring the situation there.

The Seattle District Reservoir Control Center and Emergency Operations Center began 24-hour operation Nov. 5 and will continue to operate around the clock for the foreseeable future.

Mud Mountain Dam on the White River (which feeds into the Puyallup) had inflows of 16,000 cubic feet per second at about 5 p.m. Outflows are 300 cfs, and the Reservoir Control Center plans to increase

outflows now that the Puyallup flows have peaked.

In the Skagit River basin, the Corps is regulating Upper Baker and Ross dams, and passing 15,000 out of Upper Baker and 5,000 out of Ross Dam. Inflow to the dams peaked at 39,000 cfs, and the Corps held flows to minimum outflows until the Skagit peaked at Concrete earlier today. It takes a change in flow at Ross Dam about a day to reach the town of Mount Vernon.

Howard Hanson Dam on the Green River received peak inflows of 24,000 last night at 11 p.m. The Corps is currently passing 5,300 cfs out of the dam. The Corps is monitoring downstream flows and is working to keep flows at Auburn below flood stage. Outflow will continue to decrease to slowly lower the downstream river level.

Wynoochee Dam is receiving about 3,000 cfs of inflow. The Corps is now allowing outflows from Wynoochee Dam of 3,500 cfs. When inflows peaked, Wynoochee Dam held back about 13,000 cfs, reducing the river stage downstream by 3 to 5 feet.

For up-to-date river forecasts, go to

<http://www.nwd-wc.usace.army.mil/nws/hh/index-j.html>

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The National Weather Service issues flood watches and warnings and should be consulted for that information.